

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 10-19 are pending. Claims 1-9 and 20 have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Claims 10-14, and 16-19 are amended. Claims 10 and 12 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 10 and 20 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

The Applicant appreciates the Examiner's early indication of allowable subject matter. As indicated above, allowable claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form, and independent claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 20.

Therefore, independent claims 10 and 12 are in condition for allowance.

Drawings

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner has accepted the drawings.

Claim for Priority

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner has recognized the Applicant's claim for foreign priority.

Acknowledgement of Information Disclosure Statement

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner has acknowledged the Information Disclosure Statement filed on November 13, 2003.

Claim Objections

In order to address the Examiner's objection to the claims, claims 1-9 have been cancelled, and claims 10 and 12 have been amended to address the issues pointed out by the Examiner. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Amendments to the Specification

Paragraph [0042] has been amended merely to correct a minor informality.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has set forth certain instances wherein the claim language lacks antecedent basis or is not clearly understood.

In order to overcome this rejection, the Applicant has cancelled claims 1-9 and has amended claims 10, 12-14, 16, and 19 to correct each of the deficiencies specifically pointed out by the Examiner. The Applicant respectfully submits that the claims, as amended, particularly

point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention.
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1, 2, 12, and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Nakajima et al. (JP 60-37411);

Claims 3-5, 7, 8, and 14-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakajima et al.;

Claims 1, 2, 6, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Newman (U.S. 1,950,009); and

Claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 9 11-13, 18, and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Taylor (U.S. 2,364,109).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent Claims 10 and 12

As noted above, dependent claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form, and independent claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 20. In addition, claims 10 and 12 have been amended to address the issues under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph

Therefore, independent claims 10 and 12 are in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims

The Examiner will note that dependent claims 2-3, 5-9, and 20 have been cancelled, and claims 13, 14, and 16-19 have been amended.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, as well as for the additional novel limitations set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and § 103(a) are respectfully requested.

All pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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